



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Priority: HIGH**

#### **Minister Cox lauds the signing of MOU between NALIS and Blind Welfare**

As the line Minister charged with the mandate of enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities, Senator the Honourable Donna Cox, Minister of Social Development and Family Services was pleased to witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS) and the Trinidad and Tobago Blind Welfare Association (TTBWA). This new arrangement was sealed earlier today, March 3, at the National Library of Trinidad and Tobago. This MOU is critical to the continued accessibility of resources for the blind, visually impaired and print disabled (*VIPs*) in Trinidad and Tobago.

The collaboration between NALIS and TTBWA has achieved far-reaching benefits for the community of persons with disabilities, as it seeks to provide autonomy for the two parties to provide accessible priority content to VIPs in Trinidad and Tobago, thereby facilitating increased access to opportunities and information for personal and professional development.

In her brief address, Minister Cox applauded the TTBWA for its consistent efforts to assist the blind and visually impaired community in Trinidad and Tobago. “Your multiplicity of services offered to this community are indeed vital and demonstrate the value of Civil Society Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Faith-Based Organizations to national development” said Minister Cox. She further commended NALIS for recognizing the importance of collaboration with its key stakeholders.

According to Minister Cox, “The TTBWA will provide the expertise for training- in the use of assistive technologies as well the resources to conduct classes (such as Braille, Computer, and Music Literacy, Typing and Craft) for the benefit of VIPs. This is timely, as private sector organizations have within recent times, their goodwill in this endeavour, donating assistive devices to provide support to those varying disabilities to better access and function more effectively with technology” said Minister Cox.

As she addressed the audience, the Minister indicated that the Ministry has continued with its Assistive Mobile Devices Initiative, which, in collaboration with the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, is geared towards increasing access to information through ICT for persons with disabilities. “This MOU is also expected to contribute towards the advancement of the Ministry’s digitalization agenda, as we seek to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the social service delivery system” said Minister Cox.

In closing, Minister Cox stated that this partnership forms part of a collective response to providing adequate support to this community, contributing to the achievement of the United Nations' 2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals.

Also present to witness this momentous signing were the Honourable Symon De Nobriga, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister- Communications; Chairman of the Board of NALIS, Neil Parsanlal; President of the TTBWA, Felix Cazoe; and Kenneth Suratt, Executive Officer of TTBWA.

The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services remains committed towards continuing to facilitate processes, policies and programmes to ensure greater access to information and communication by persons with disabilities.



Minister Cox delivers remarks at the signing of MOU between NALIS and TTBWA



Minister Cox and the Honourable Symon De Nobriga, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister- Communications witness the signing of the MOU between NALIS and TTBWA. Pictured signing are Kenneth Suratt, Executive Officer of TTBWA and Neil Parsanlal, Chairman of the Board of NALIS